

"Test to Stay" approved for Hiawatha schools

(KNZA)--“Test to Stay” is approved by the Hiawatha Board of Education, despite concerns ranging from liability due to the coronavirus test’s cited 80-percent accuracy to stress on staff to conduct the testing.

The issue was first explored last month by the School Board for Hiawatha’s USD 415, with school nurse Erin Wenger bringing the idea to the board, explaining at that time that the Kansas Department of Health and Environment is offering a grant, known as “Test to Stay,” which covers the costs of testing, as well as the addition of staff to administer testing on-site at the schools.

Utilizing the grant would allow students to stay in school, without having to be quarantined, if they have a negative test daily for ten days.

Parents would provide written permission one time, good through the school year, for tests to be conducted. They can opt out at any time.

The matter, following the school board’s consensus last month to pursue the grant, was addressed during a special school board meeting Wednesday afternoon.

The [Hiawatha World](#) reports that following discussion, including the voicing of concerns by school board members, approval of the grant came on a vote of 5 to 1, with School Board President Tom Simmer casting the lone no vote, based on, according to the report, his view that unnecessary testing would be conducted, and that last year’s mask mandate worked.